Message Text

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DRAFTED BY:ARA/ECA:DVANTREECK:RC APPROVED BY :ARA/ECA:RWZIMMERMANN

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R 192312Z JAN 78 FM SECSTATE WASHDC TO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

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FOLLOWING TAIPEI 00298 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMEMBASSY'S SEOUL BANGKOK MANILA JAKARTA KUALA LUMPUR BRASILIA MADRID ROME TOKYO HONG KONG 16 JAN

QUOTE: CONFIDENTIAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, TW
SUBJECT: SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO CIRCUMVENT FOOTWEAR ORDERLY
MARKETING AGREEMENTS (OMA)

REF: STATE 008343

1. ECON COUN DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE REFTEL WITH VICE MINISTER
OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS Y.T. WONG JANUARY 14. WONG ADMITTED
THAT A FEW QUOTE UNSCRUPULOUS UNQUOTE ROC FOOTWEAR FIRMS MAY
HAVE ATTEMPTED TO CIRCUMVENT OMA BY SHIFTING MANUFACTURING
OPERATIONS TO THIRD COUNTRIES BUT PRACTICE IS NOT WIDESPREAD
AND GROC IS TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT CIRCUMVENTION BY CLOSELY
MONITORING EXPORT LICENSES. PROBLEM IS DETERMING PURPOSE
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FOR WHICH FOOTWEAR COMPONENTS ARE EXPORTED. DISTINCTION MUST BE DRAWN BETWEEN ROC FIRM IN CAHOOTS WITH THIRD COUNTRY IN ORDER TO EVADE OMA AND ROC FIRM WHICH IS MERELY SELLING COMPONENTS TO THIRD COUNTRY FIRM WHICH IS UNABLE TO OBTAIN SUCH COMPONENTS LOCALLY. OBVIOUSLY, THERE ARE FIRMS IN COUNTRIES WHICH ARE NOT SUBJECT TO OMA RESTRICTIONS WHICH NOW WISH TO MANUFACTURE FOOTWEAR COVERED

BY THE OMA AND SELLING COMPONENTS TO THOSE FIRMS IS CONSIDERED BY GROC TO BE NORMAL COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION IF THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF COLLUSION BETWEEN THOSE FIRMS AND ROC FIRMS.

- 2. WONG COMMENTED THAT GROC IS AWARE OF ITS RESPONSI-BILITIES UNDER THE OMA AND IT WILL DO THE BEST IT CAN TO INSURE THAT LOCAL FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURERS ALSO RESPECT THE AGREEMENT. MALEFACTORS WILL BE PUNISHED WHEN CAUGHT BUT CATCHING THEM IS NOT EASY, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE BOARD OF FOREIGN TRADE IS NOT STAFFED TO INVESTIGATE THROROUGHLY EACH AND EVERY REQUEST FOR AN EXPORT LICENSE SUBMITTED BY A FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURER.
- 3. WITH REGARD TO THE OMA ITSELF, WONG COMMENTED THAT PRICES IN THE US FOR FOOTWEAR COVERED IN THE AGREEMENT WITH THE ROC HAVE RISEN SHARPLY BECAUSE OF STRONG DEMAND WHICH CANNOT BE FILLED BECAUSE OF AGREEMENT LEVELS. U.S. FOOTWEAR IMPORTERS ALSO TELL HIM THAT PRICES WILL GO EVEN HIGHER IN 1978 SINCE THE US FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IS NOT PREPARED TO MEET THE DEMAND. IN WONG'S OPINION, NO ONE HAS BENEFITTED FROM THE OMA, INCLUDING ROC EXPORTERS, THE US SHOE INDUSTRY AND, ABOVE ALL, THE US CONSUMER.

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